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FLOOR DEBATE

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the State Care Tech II had a 79 percent turnover rate; the Licensed Practical Nurse had a 50 percent turnover rate; the Nurse II or an RN had a 50 percent turnover rate. We're losing these caregivers, who understand the facility, who know the patients, at an excessive rate. These people are leaving, partly because of low morale. Low morale is there partly because of staff salary, partly because of administrative decisions, and that kind of turnover rate jeopardizes the care and the health and the well-being of the veterans in the Thomas Fitzgerald Home. There are equal rates at some of these other care facilities as well. Some information that I have, the Norfolk Veterans' Home technicians have a 50 percent turn... 52 percent turnover rate; the Grand Island Veterans' Home has a 77 percent turnover rate. I also ready mentioned Thomas Fitzgerald at 79. The Western Nebraska Veterans' Home has a 56 percent turnover rate in that technician category; Beatrice State Development Center, 49 percent turnover; the Lincoln Regional Center, 50 percent turnover; the Hastings Regional Center, 30 percent; and the Norfolk Regional Center, at the lowest, 20 percent. In the nurse category, again, we have Thomas Fitzgerald at 50 percent; Lincoln Regional Center, 42 percent; the Norfolk Veterans' Home, 43 percent; the licensed practical nurses at Grand Island Veterans' Home, 41 percent; the Lincoln Regional Center, 40 percent. All four veterans' homes have lost approximately 400 workers. These are trained workers. These are skilled caregivers that either are leaving to go to other facilities where they can make more money or leaving for other jobs partly because, again, of morale or low wages. When we lose that experienced care, when we have people providing medications to these ill people, when they're providing the continuity of care, that knows what took place the day before and should continue to happen, we compromise the healthcare of the people in these centers. I don't think that's good public policy...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR PREISTER: ...and when we take the state resources and we spend \$1.7 million on providing pool or temporary workers, that I don't think is a good use of state resources. Anywhere from 15 to 24 temporary people on any given day are hired at the